

REMARKS**Response to Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. §§121 and 372**

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application and have been subjected to election of an invention group and a single disclosed catalyst for prosecution on the merits under 35 U.S.C. §121 and §372. In the Examiner's opinion, as set forth in the Detailed Action, the application contains claims directed to two patentably distinct inventions as follows:

Group I: Claims 1-16, drawn to a method for preparing an ester condensate; and

Group II: Claims 17-28, drawn to a catalyst for preparing an ester condensate.

In response to the Restriction Requirement, the applicants **provisionally elect Group II**, including claims 17-28, drawn to a catalyst for preparing an ester condensate.

Furthermore, the Examiner is of the opinion that the application contains claims directed to more than one catalyst. According to the Examiner, the election of a catalyst would not constitute an election of species.

The catalyst of the claimed invention can be combined as follows:

- A.** a zirconium (IV) compound and iron compound (Claims 17-19 and 22-28);
- B.** a zirconium (IV) compound and gallium compound (Claims 17-19 and 22-28);
- C.** a hafnium (IV) compound and iron compound (Claims 17 and 20-28); and
- D.** a hafnium (IV) compound and gallium compound (Claims 17 and 20-28).

The applicants provisionally elect a catalyst comprising a zirconium (IV) compound and an iron compound (**Catalyst A**). Claims 17-19 and 22-28 of **Group II** encompass the elected catalyst composition.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, the applicants respectfully request allowance of this application.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. **13-4500**, Order No. 4439-4041.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. **13-4500**, Order No. 4439-4041.

Respectfully submitted,
MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.

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By:



Evelyn M. Kwon
Registration No. 54,246

Correspondence Address:

MORGAN & FINNEGAN, L.L.P.
3 World Financial Center
New York, NY 10281-2101

(212) 415-8700 Telephone
(212) 415-8701 Facsimile